Pistons to Jets

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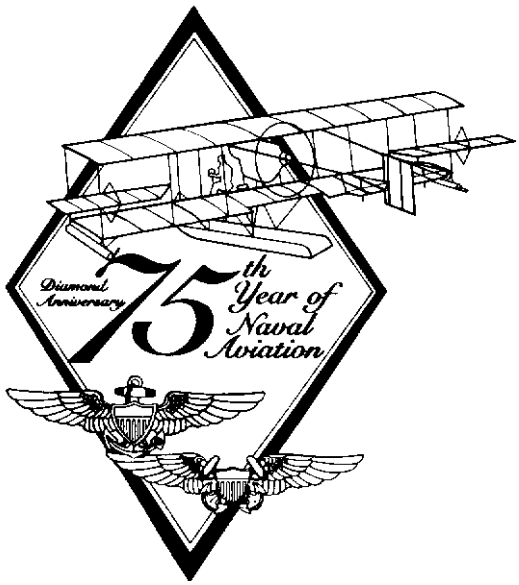

Introduction

Engines are the hearts of airplanes. Before the age of powered flight, variations of balloons and gliders challenged the sky and scored some victories. With the introduction of power plants, aircraft became more obedient to the human beings who manipulated those engines than to the meteorological whims of the wind.

"Changes in hearts" — improvements, for the most part — enabled flying machines to go much faster, from 30 or so miles per hour to supersonic levels, in the span of a human lifetime.

Unlike mortal hearts, all of which bear the same design, aircraft power plants appeared in a vast assortment of shapes with varying capabilities through the years. Some failed to match expectations. Others exceeded them. Many performed yeoman service as advertised. All contributed to the continuously rising chart line of new technology. Common to the success of any engine, though, is the maintenance effort required to ensure that it functions properly. There isn't a Naval Aviator on the planet who doesn't owe a debt of gratitude to the mechanics. The folks with wrench in hand and a formidable combination of determination and knowledge have kept and continue to keep the motors purring in peace and war.

This monograph is dedicated to them.

Pistons

From foreground to background are a Skyraider, Panther, and Corsair. All three were used extensively during the Korean War.